TALKS BY
KRISHNAMURTI
IN CEYLON 1957

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(*Verbatim Report*)

*This Report is issued primarily for those who heard the Talks*



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# I

## TALK IN COLOMBO

It seems to me that the many problems which we have, not only in this country but throughout the world, are increasing and becoming more and more complex. When we try to solve a particular problem, other problems spring into being, so there arises a wide network of problems endlessly multiplying itself, and there seems to be no way out of it. I think anyone who is at all thoughtful is aware of this dilemma.

Now, if you and I as individual human beings are to understand this complex process of existence, I think it is essential that we approach it in all humility. It is only when the mind is actually in a state of humility that it can learn. We cannot approach our problems with old ideas, with stereotyped answers, with a particular ideology or pattern of thought. We have to approach these problems anew — and there lies our difficulty. As we are now, most of us are incapable of learning from the problem, because we approach the problem with a mind that has already learnt. I think there is a vast difference between the mind that is open to the problem, and a mind that approaches the problem with an ideology. A mind that approaches the problem with an ideology, a preconceived answer, is incapable of learning from the problem.

We have to learn from the problem, because the problem is a challenge, and a challenge is always new. But unfortunately most of us approach any problem with conclusions, with a mind already made up, with a mind that is conditioned as a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Christian, a Communist, a Socialist, or what you will—which means that we are incapable of learning. So it is essential, is it not?, that each one of us individually should be open to the problem. I think this is the central issue and that we should see it very clearly.

During the talks that are going to be held here, if you are at all serious in your intent, you have to understand the relationship between yourself and the speaker. It is not a question of someone teaching you; on the contrary, you and I as individuals are going to learn, and there is no division between the teacher and the taught. Such a division is unethical, unspiritual, irreligious. Please understand this very clearly. I am not dogmatic or assertive. As long as we do not understand the relationship between you and the speaker, we will remain in a false position. To me there is only learning, not the person who knows and the person who does not know. The moment anyone says he knows, he does not know. Truth is not to be known. What is known is a thing of the past, it is already dead. Truth is living, not static, therefore you cannot know truth. Truth is in constant movement, it has no abode, and a mind that is tethered to a belief, to knowledge, to a particular conditioning, is incapable of understanding what is truth.

As you and I are going to explore this whole problem, inquire into it together, we are in a position of learning, are we not? Therefore there is no division of the teacher and the taught. To me the follower is essentially stupid, as is the teacher who admits the following. When you are following there is no enlightenment, you are not a light unto yourself; you have no love in your heart, but merely the description of the teacher who tells you what love is. So is it not very important, if you are at all serious, that we should establish from the very beginning the right relationship between us? If you are here merely out of curiosity, for amusement,

that has its *own* worth. But the occasion *and* the immense crisis *demand* that you be serious—serious, *not* in the sense of following your prejudices, interests or bent in a *particular* direction, but serious *to understand*.

What we *are* trying to do, then, is to *take* a journey of understanding together—*together,* which means that I am not leading and you are not following. To me, the leader, the teacher, the *guru,* is essentially unmoral, unethical, unspiritual. We are human beings, free to inquire, to find out if there is God, if there is truth, if there is something beyond the measure of the mind. But you cannot find what is beyond the measure of the mind if you are merely following a pattern of dogma, or belief. The problems of life are so immense, so catastrophic, so urgent and important, that the mind must be capable of understanding, of really going into the problem profoundly, and not merely scratching the surface. To do that, the mind has to uncondition itself; for after all, our minds are conditioned, are they not? You are conditioned as a Buddhist, you are conditioned by the climate you live in, by the food you eat, by the books you read, by newspapers and propaganda. Your mind is obviously the result of influences and pressures, and you are nothing but that. You may think that you are something more; but if you investigate, go into it very seriously, you will see that your mind is actually the result of the collective. When you say you are a Sinhalese, that statement is the result of the collective. You are not an individual, you are the result of the propaganda which says you are a Sinhalese with a particular religion, a particular culture. As a Buddhist you are conditioned by the beliefs, by the dogmas, by the superstitions, by the fears of that particular religion, while a Christian is conditioned from childhood to believe in a Saviour, to follow certain rituals, and so on. In the Russian world the Communist is conditioned *not* to believe, and he will tell you that all this belief in God is sheer nonsense. He is conditioned, just as you are conditioned. It is an unpalatable thing to swallow, but it is so.

Now, this conditioning influences our thinking and limits our perception; and it is only when the mind frees itself from its conditioning that it is able to understand the many problems which confront us. So, is the mind capable of freeing itself from its conditioning? Do you understand, sirs? What is important is not to find a better conditioning, a nobler spiritual pattern, but for the mind to free itself from *all* patterns. And is the mind capable of freeing itself? Surely, it is only a free mind that can respond adequately to the challenge of our ever-mounting problems and misery. Outwardly you may have what you need; sufficient clothing, food and shelter may be provided by the State. Outwardly, through terror, wars may be stopped, but inwardly there will still be contradiction, strife; there will still be misery, chaos, disturbance, uncertainty within ourselves. We are individually the sum-total of all that, and we have to understand it; for it is only the mind that has self-knowledge, that understands the whole working process of itself—it is only such a mind that is capable of being free from its conditioning and responding to the challenge anew.

What conditions our minds? It is really very simple if you observe it. Our ambitions, our greed, our envy, our pursuit of personal expansion, of power, position, prestige, our desire to be secure both in the world of relationship and in the world of ideas—all that is what conditions the mind.

Religion as organized belief and dogma, is not religion at all. Religion

is something entirely different from the mere acceptance of belief or the practice of a ritual. Religion, surely, is the process of freeing the mind from envy, from greed, from ambition, so that the self-centred activity of the 'I' no longer exists; and only such a mind is capable of pursuing in utter silence the movement of reality. That is why it is important to have a religious revolution—which is the only revolution, because mere economic revolution will inevitably fail.

The religious revolution of which I speak has nothing whatever to do with any established religion. On the contrary, to have this religious revolution one must be free from all organized dogma and belief, for only then is the mind capable of experiencing that which is real. But unfortunately, most of us do not give time to this; we are too busy with our daily lives, with earning a livelihood, with the things of the world. Being too busy, we multiply mischief in the world, and then we say "What can I as an individual do?"

If you observe you will see it is only the enlightened individual that is capable of doing anything, not the mass, not the collective; and the enlightened individual is one who has an inward knowledge of himself, of the activities of his own mind, the operations of his own thought. To be truly aware, not only of the workings of the superficial mind but also of the unconscious, is the beginning of self-knowledge; and without self-knowledge there is self-deception, illusion, therefore you can never find out what is truth.

Self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom. This self-knowledge is not to be gathered from books, but you can find it for yourself through observing your daily relationship with your wife or husband, with your children, with your boss, with the conductor of the bus. It is through awareness of yourself in your relationship with another that you discover the workings of your own mind, and this understanding of yourself is the beginning of the freedom from conditioning. If you go into it deeply you will find that the mind becomes very quiet, really still. This stillness is not the stillness of a mind that is disciplined, held, controlled, but the stillness which comes when, through the understanding of relationship, the mind has ceased to be a centre of self-interest. Such a mind is capable of following that which is beyond the measure of the mind.

I have some questions here, but before we consider them I think we should understand the intention of the questions and the replies.

Why do you ask a question? Obviously, to find an answer—which means that you are interested, not in the problem, but in the answer. Now, you can understand a problem only when you give your total attention to it, and you cannot give your total attention to it as long as the mind is seeking an answer. Is it not so? I think we ought to see that very clearly.

For example, there is enmity, hate, and what we are concerned with is how to get rid of it. So we go about seeking ways and means of getting rid of hate; we try to get rid of it through disciplines, practices, and so on. But surely that is not the problem. What makes the mind hate? Why is there animosity? Why is there unfriendliness? *That* is the problem, not how to be free. To understand the whole problem of enmity, jealousy, envy, to go to the very end of it and understand it totally, I must give it my full attention. Then there is no answer: the problem itself is resolved.

I don't know if you have ever tried to give your total attention to something. Have you ever tried to look at

a flower completely, without evaluating, without judging? You will find it is an extraordinarily difficult thing to do, because your mind immediately says that the flower is beautiful, or that it is of such and such a species, and you either like or dislike it. In the very process of verbalizing, judging, evaluating, your mind has gone away from the object of attention. But if you can give complete attention to something, you will find that that complete attention is the good; you do not have to pursue the good. Such attention is the process of meditation—not the battle to exclude the various thoughts that keep creeping into the mind.

So in considering these questions we are not trying to answer them, because to the immense problems of life there is no answer. It is a very superficial and silly mind that seeks an answer. But a mind that gives its whole attention to the problem will find that, in the process of understanding the problem, the problem has ceased.

*Question*: *Like many of my valued friends, I am an ardently religious Sinhalese Buddhist, and I feel intensely for our religion and our culture. But unfortunately, in furthering our religion and our culture, I see that we are unconsciously getting divided into opposing parties. What would you advise me to do?*

KRISHNAMURTI: It is not a matter of advice, but together we are going to find out what the problem involves.

The questioner says that he is an ardently religious Sinhalese Buddhist. But is it possible to be a Sinhalese or a Buddhist and still be religious? (*Laughter*). Don't laugh, sirs, this is not a political meeting. Can you be religious as long as you are a Christian or an Englishman? Can you be religious and belong to India? Are they not contradictory? Is nationalism compatible with love? Please, it is your problem. I am not a Christian, a Buddhist, or a Hindu, nor do I belong to any other religious or nationalistic group. It is your problem, because you say you are an ardently religious Sinhalese Buddhist, and you want to maintain a particular culture. You don't see immediately the absurdity of such a statement.

What do you mean by culture? What do you mean when you say you are a Buddhist, a Sinhalese? Since you happen to live on this island, you are made conscious—through propaganda, through the machinations of politicians, through so-called education and other forms of influence—of belonging to a particular group, and you think in terms of that group.

But what does it mean to be religious? Surely, to be religious is not to belong to any organized religion. To be religious is to be kind, to be generous, to love, not to harm, not to kill. That is all. To love, to be kind, you don't have to belong to any religion; not to have enmity, not to be ambitious, not to be self-centred, you don't have to profess any creed or belief. Religion as organized belief does not contain truth. No temple, no church, no mosque has truth in it; they are all man-built, and what man has put together, man can undo. So why call yourself a Sinhalese or a Buddhist? We are human beings, sirs, not labels. We all suffer, we are inwardly tortured by misery, loneliness, sorrow. These are human problems, not the problems of a Buddhist, a Christian, or a Hindu, and we have to solve them together as human beings.

Do please understand this, it is so simple. Religions, organised beliefs, divide, and destroy people. See what is happening in the world. There are Catholics and Protestants, Northern

Buddhists and Southern Buddhists, Hindus, Moslems, and so on. As the earth is broken up into little patches of nationalistic ownership, so religion has been divided by man; it has become a form of vested interest. So why call yourself a Sinhalese or a Buddhist? If we strip ourselves of all these idiotic labels and remain as simple human beings, then perhaps we shall create a different world, a world in which people are not divided as Sinhalese and Hindus, Christians and Buddhists, Englishmen and Russians. That division is a major cause of your miseries.

Please, sirs, understand this. You have divided man for economic reasons basically, and also to be secure in a particular pattern of belief; so you are destroying yourselves. You will have no peace in the world until you cease to be labelled as Christians, Buddhists, Hindus. The important thing in all this is to have friendliness, to have compassion, to have love; and we do not have friendliness, compassion, love, so justice comes into being—justice being legislation. Governments make you conform to a pattern; and when justice is a matter of legislation forcing the people to conform, there is no love. A mind-heart that is full of love needs no such justice; a mind-heart that is free from all labels, whether Christian, Buddhist, Communist, or what you will, is capable of bringing about a different world.

Now, sirs, you have listened to the problem. What will you do about it? You will probably agree intellectually, that is, verbally, and say "It sounds reasonable and true"; but when you go outside you will again fall into the trap, into the old habit of following the social pattern. Only the man who renounces the social pattern *completely*—only such a man is a religious person. But unfortunately, though you hear what is being said, you will forget about it and go back to your old way of thinking. What a strange thing!

These meetings are not propagandistic in any sense. I am not trying to propagate an idea. On the contrary, there are no ideas, but only understanding. To understand, we must investigate together, there must be friendliness, a feeling of companionship, a sense of affection. But we cannot have affection, friendliness, if you are a Buddhist and I a Hindu. So those of you who have listened to this, because it is the truth, have an immense responsibility. If you are at all serious you cannot possibly go back to the old; you may call yourself a Buddhist, a Sinhalese, in applying for a passport, but that is a mere formality. If you are emotionally, inwardly free from all labels, then the authority of the church, of the past, drops away, so that the mind is capable of seeing and understanding what *is*; and such a mind, being in a state of real compassion, will solve the many problems that confront each one of us.

*Question: In Ceylon we have various religions, but some priests incite their followers to hate those belonging to other religions, which creates serious trouble among the people in general. What is the true function of a priest?*

KRISHNAMURTI: Sir, why do we have these various religions at all? Why is there the Christian religion, the Buddhist religion, the Moslem religion, and so on? Have you thought about it at all? Each religion maintains that it is a path, if not the only path to truth, to God, to the Highest. Now, is there a path to truth? Or is it that truth is a living thing, and a path can lead only to that which is fixed, static? So, having conceived of truth, of God, as a fixed thing, we have divided our-

selves into *various* religious groups, and each group maintains that its particular system or its particular saviour is the path to the Highest. Why do they do so? First of all, because of property and vested interests. Religions that have property, vested interests, are no longer religions, they are like any other commercial affair.

Please, sirs, listen diligently. I am not attacking, I am only showing what is actually happening. The Christian says that there is only one Saviour, and that everyone who does not hold that particular belief is eternally damned. What absurd nonsense, and what cruelty is involved in it! Each religion maintains its own tradition, its *guru*, its priesthood, and says that it is the path to truth. And why should there be these different religions at all, with their conflicting dogmas and beliefs? If you observe you will see that they exist because you are conditioned from childhood to believe in something, and you are caught for the rest of your life in that belief; and having been conditioned, you are exploited through fear, through vanity, through flattery, through every available means. This is what is actually happening throughout the world. Religions are not interested in reality, they are not interested that men should be free from ambition, from greed, from envy, from hate, from killing each other. No religion has stopped war. That is why religions have failed.

There is no path to reality. Reality is a pathless land, and you must venture out and discover it for yourself. It is because you are frightened inwardly that you depend on something, on the priest, or on a belief, and so you get caught in the net of an organized religion. Wherever organized religions may lead you, they will certainly not lead you to truth. You must go beyond organized religions to find truth.

The second part of the question is, "What is the true function of a priest?"

What do you mean by a priest? The man in a yellow robe, the sannyasi, or the man who wears a clerical collar, and so on? The priest is supposed to be a mediator between you and reality, between you and God, between you and the immeasurable, is he not? But can there be a mediator between you and the real? How can there be? Haven't you to be a light unto yourself? Then what need is there for a priest? To love, to be compassionate, to be kind, to be generous, do you need a priest? And if the priest is an interpreter, a mediator between you and reality, does he know reality? Or is he merely conditioned in a particular ideology which he calls reality? Can there be a mediator between you and that which is beyond all measure? If you need a mediator, an interpreter, then you are not seeking truth; what you want is comfort, gratification, and you might just as well take a pill. Please, sirs, I am talking very seriously. Religions with their priests are unnecessary to a man who is seeking truth. A man who is seeking to understand what is compassion, what is love, does not want a priest, he does not want an organized belief; to him, love is more important than belief.

Surely, sirs, to love, to be compassionate, is the only door to reality; there is no other door. But how can you be compassionate, kind, generous, friendly, as long as you are ambitious? You want to be somebody in the world, do you not? You want to be famous, you want to succeed, and your whole social structure is based on acquisitiveness, competition. When your only concern is to get on in the world, to have more property, to achieve success, how can you love, how can there be compassion?

So most of us are not concerned with compassion, with love; we are only concerned with getting ahead, making a success of it, with having labels such as 'Buddhist', 'Hindu', 'Christian'—and then we quarrel over the labels. Each one is trying to convert the other, and in converting others you have more votes, more property, more power. You can see this game going on throughout the world, and this game is called religion.

Surely, religion is something extraordinary; it has nothing to do with any organization, with any belief or dogma. Religion is not to be found in any temple, in any church or mosque. It is to be found only when the mind understands itself and is free from fear, free from the demand to be inwardly secure. Then there is a possibility of being compassionate, kindly, and such a mind-heart will know that which is immeasurable; for then the immeasurable *is*. It is not a thing to be speculated about, it has to be experienced directly. There is something beyond the measure of the mind, but it is not to be found in the *Upanishads,* in the *Gita,* in the *Bible,* nor in the Buddhist literature. It comes through the understanding of yourself in your relationship with people, with nature, and with ideas. When you understand yourself completely you will discover without any aid from another, without any organized religion, without any priest, that beyond the mind there is something which is timeless. It is a state that can be experienced only when the mind is completely still.

*January* 13, 1957.

## II

TALK IN COLOMBO

We are confronted with a world that is rapidly changing, whose challenges have to be met; and as it is impossible for a mind that is bound by tradition, by the past, to meet these challenges rightly, fully and adequately, I think it is very important that we understand the fundamental issues. We know from what we read in the papers that extraordinary material progress is being made in America, and we also know what is taking place in Europe; and we can see very clearly that some fundamental change is necessary, that we cannot go on in the way that we have been accustomed to. We cannot possibly continue to think in terms of Asia, Europe, or America. We have to think anew, because the challenge is totally new. After all, every challenge is new and has to be met with a fresh mind, a mind that is not conditioned, not influenced by a background or possessed by tradition. Such a total transformation is necessary in each one of us, for we can see that our minds are tethered to the past. Because of our education, because of our religious training, because of our social influences and moral pressures, our minds are at present incapable of meeting the challenge anew.

So our problem is, is it not, how is the mind to undergo a radical transformation? I do not know if you have ever thought about the problem in this manner. We generally think about changing gradually. That is, by the pursuit of an ideal we say that we shall eventually bring about a transformation within ourselves, and thereby change society. Gradualism is a very convenient and satisfying theory; but actually you will see, if you observe, that you do not change through a gradual process. Ideals are not the means of transforming the mind. A man who pursues an ideal, however noble, is really caught in the process of postponement, in the ways of indolence. We shall understand this as we go along.

Before I proceed with what I want to talk about this evening, may I say that I think it is very important to know how to listen. Most of us do not really listen, because we always listen with an objection, with interpretations; we translate what is being said in terms of our own ideas, or compare it with what we already know; so actually we never listen. If you have ever attempted really to listen to somebody you will know how extraordinarily difficult it is, because you have innumerable prejudices which come like a screen between yourself and the person to whom you are trying to listen. But if one can listen without judging, without comparing, without translating, then I think such listening has an extraordinary effect. Such listening brings about a total revolution in the mind, because it demands complete attention; and complete attention is the complete good.

So I would like to suggest that you try to listen in that way to the talk this evening, and then you will see how very difficult it is. I may say something totally new, and because you happen to be a Buddhist, a Christian, or a Hindu, steeped in a particular ideology, you will naturally have objections, reactions; you will compare what is being said with what you already know, which means that you are actually not listening at all. Your mind is so astonishingly active in comparing, judging, evaluating, that it is really distracted. What matters is to listen with that peculiar attention which is not an effort, which is not absorption—and you do listen in that manner when you really want to find out, when there is urgency. Such an urgency exists at the present period in the world crisis. It cannot wait for you to transform yourself gradually. It demands direct action on the part of each individual immediately.

The difficulty for most of us is that we are mesmerized by the word 'collective' and think that individual action is of very little value. We say "What can I as an individual do against the mass, against this mountain of the collective?" Whereas, if you look more closely, you will find that the total action of the individual—if that total action is very clear, not befuddled by the influences of the collective, of the mass, nor by the influences of the past—is deeply effective. Because the collective is confused, the individual is generally confused. We want guidance and so we look to the past; we try to revive the religion of the past, or we turn to the *guru* immediately round the corner. But will any guidance clarify a confused mind?

Please follow this a little bit, if you will. Our minds are confused. Each one of us is confused, there are no two ways about it. Religions have failed totally. You may mutter a lot of prayers, go to the temple, attend church, follow a particular routine or practice in accordance with what they say in the books; but that is not religion. Religion is something totally different. A confused mind may seek guidance in the things that have been said by various teachers, or repeat ten thousand prayers, but it will still remain confused because it is confused at the centre. Such a mind may clarify itself at the periphery, but at the core of its being there is uncertainty, tremendous confusion, a lack of real clarity of thinking.

The moment an individual realizes that he is confused and cannot possibly look to the past or turn to another to be taught how to clear up his confusion, then his problem will be to find out for himself what has produced this confusion. But most of us are unwilling, I think, to admit that we are confused—and this attitude is obviously a fallacy, a self-deception, because everything around us and in ourselves

points to confusion. We are in a state of self-contradiction. We try to lead a religious life, and yet we are worldly; in us there is sorrow, misery, frustration, many desires pulling in different directions. All this indicates, does it not?, a sense of confusion. And you have to realize that when you are confused you cannot possibly rely on anything; because the moment you rely on something when you are confused, that reliance merely breeds further confusion. One of the major causes of confusion is the following of authority. That is what we have done for many thousands of years: we have followed spiritual authority.

Please, as I am talking, look at your own life; observe your own daily activities, observe your thoughts. I am only describing what is actually taking place. If you merely listen to the words and do not relate what is being said to the activities of your own mind, it will have no meaning at all. But if you can relate what is being said to your everyday life, to the actual state of your own mind, then the talk will have an immense significance, because then you will find that I am not telling you what to do; on the contrary, through the description, through the explanation, you are going to discover for yourself the process of your own thinking. And when you understand yourself, clarity comes. It is self-knowledge that brings clarity, not dependence on a book, a teacher, or a guide. To observe how you think, the manner of your response to challenge in your various relationships—to be aware of all that, not theoretically but actually, will reveal the process of yourself; and in that understanding there is clarity. So please, if I may most earnestly request it, listen and relate what you hear to the actual state of your own mind. Then these talks will be worthwhile; otherwise they will be mere words to be soon forgotten.

You may not be aware that you are confused, but if you inquire deeply you will find that it is so. One of the major causes of this confusion is your reliance on authority for guidance: reliance on the church, on the priest, on the book, on the authority of a teacher. All living based on authority, as has been shown recently both politically and militarily, is the most destructive form of existence. Tyranny, whether of the State or of the priest, is detrimental to thought, to a really spiritual life; and as most of us live in the cage of authority, we have lost the capacity to think clearly and directly for ourselves.

The fundamental change of which I am speaking comes when you no longer depend on any authority for the clarity of your own thinking. Authority is a very complex affair; because there is not only the authority of society, of the government, but there is also the authority of tradition, of the book, of the priest, the church, the temple. And even if you reject all that, there is still the authority of your own experience, and that experience is based on the past. After all, life is a process of challenge and response, and your response to challenge is experience. But that experience, which is a response to challenge, is dictated by your conditioning, by your past, so your experience is never original; therefore you cannot possibly rely on experience for clarity of thought. I think this is very important to understand. Knowledge is the residue of past experience, and if you rely on that knowledge to translate all your experiences, they will only strengthen the past and therefore condition your mind further.

To make it simple: you are a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Moslem or a Christian, or you are a Communist, which means that you have been taught to think in a

certain direction, and according to that background you have experience—the experience being your response to challenge. This is taking place every day. You respond to challenge in terms of your past conditioning, and therefore your experience further strengthens your conditioning, which is obvious. So there is the authority not only of the priest, of the church, of the temple, of the book, but also the authority of the knowledge which you have accumulated through personal experience.

As I was saying, there must be a complete inward revolution, a total transformation in your thought, in your whole being; and that is not possible as long as you rely on authority, whether it be the authority of the Buddha, or of one of the Indian teachers, including myself. To rely on authority at any time destroys the capacity to find out what is truth. Freedom from authority is the beginning of the fundamental revolution, of this individual transformation which is essential to the discovery of what is truth, what is God; and it is only this discovery on the part of each one of us that can bring about a different world.

Mind is not made free through a deliberate act, or through any practice. Mind is made free from moment to moment, and then there is the understanding of truth at each moment. You cannot understand what is truth if you merely repeat that which you have been told; so a complete purgation of the mind and heart is necessary. We have to set out on the journey anew, which means that we cannot start with any assumption, any conclusion, however noble or profound it may be. When the mind starts thinking with a conclusion, it is not thinking at all. A mind that is capable of thought in the real sense of the word, has no conclusion, therefore it always starts anew; and it is only for such a mind that there is a possibility of discovering what is truth.

Sirs, if you observe your own minds you will see how extraordinarily difficult it is to think without a conclusion, whether it be the conclusion of ten thousand years ago, or of yesterday. These conclusions, either given to you or self-created, prevent clarity of thought and bring about confusion. So a mind that would clear up its own confusion must be aware of how it is caught in authority. I do not mean the authority which requires you to drive on the right or the left side of the road. I am talking of authority in a much deeper and more profound sense—the authority to which the mind clings.

After all, the mind is everlastingly seeking security for itself. It wants to be safe, it wants to be comfortable; and a mind that is concerned with its own security, or with the security of the particular group with which it has identified itself, is bound to create confusion, which is exactly what is happening in the world. Most of us are identified with a group, with a class, with a country, with a religion, which means that we think fragmentarily, in departments; therefore we are incapable of thinking out the many problems which are so pressing and urgent. Whereas, an individual who thinks clearly, who is unafraid to go into himself totally, not only at the conscious but also at the unconscious level—such an individual, I assure you, has an extraordinary vitality, the energy to create. And it is such individuals alone who can bring about a different world—not the scientist, and certainly not the priest or the politician.

Sirs, please, you are all politicians at heart, because you are concerned with immediate results, with the past or the future, and not with the totality of the human mind. And this inward revolution, this fundamental change, can

take place only when you as an individual free your mind from the authority of society, of the church, of the State, and discover for yourself that which is eternal. It is this individual revolution, with the discovery of truth which it brings, that has a transforming effect on the world—not the economic revolution.

It is imperative, then, that those who are really in earnest should be aware of their own state, of their own idiosyncrasies, of their own conditioning, so that there can be no self-deception. For the beginning of wisdom is in self-knowledge, not in what you learn from the books. It is through observing how you talk, how you behave in your daily relationship with your wife, with your child, with your boss, that you discover yourself; and that discovery is the beginning of wisdom. Out of self-knowledge comes clarity, and then you do not rely on anybody; then you are a guide to yourself, a light in the midst of darkness.

*Question: What is the religious life? Is it compatible with the struggle for existence which most of us have to face? Is the religious life necessary at all?*

KRISHNAMURTI: For the moment let us not consider what is the religious life; we will come to that presently. But why do we divide the religious life from our daily life? Do we know what our daily life is? Are we aware of it, do we throb with it, suffer with it? Or do we merely say "I live a routine life and it is terribly boring, unsatisfactory, therefore I want to take up the religious life"?—as if the religious life were entirely apart from our everyday living. It is because we do not understand our everyday living with all its sufferings, with all its ambitions, cruelties, contradictions, envies, deceptions, that we think we must turn to religion and find God somewhere else. But it is fatal to think in this fragmentary way, in these water-tight compartments, is it not? First let us find out what our daily existence is and understand it; then perhaps we shall find out what reality is.

Whether we have to eschew the religious life in order to live in this world, and what the religious life is, we shall find out only when we understand our relationship with each other. That much is clear, is it not? If we do not understand our everyday life of going to the office, educating our children; if we do not understand lust, ambition, envy, greed, cruelty, and all the appalling things that are going on within ourselves, with an occasional flash of joy—if we don't understand all that, how can we understand something which is beyond all that? Without understanding the mind, anything that we try to understand beyond the mind will be equally confused, equally stupid. Surely, that is clear, is it not? A petty mind may think of God, but its God will be petty also. It may conceive of nirvana, moksha, heaven, or whatever it be, but its conception will be according to its own state.

So, is the religious life necessary? You will find the answer for yourself when you begin to understand the ways of your own living. The question is very simple but the understanding of it is extremely complex, because it requires a great deal of penetration.

Take, for instance, the very simple fact that our life is based on envy. That is so, is it not? Someone is more intelligent than I am, and I want to be equally intelligent; someone is more handsome, or has more money and can travel, and I want to be like him. The mind is constantly comparing itself with others, and such a mind is envious.

An ambitious mind is obviously an envious mind; and that is our life, it is how we live from day to day. You know that very well without my telling you. At least, I am describing a fact, and if you are unwilling to look at the fact, it is your affair. It is a fact that our society is based on envy, and the morality of such a society is mere respectability, the perpetuation of a custom. Our daily life is based on this envious, acquisitive struggle, and we carry the same struggle into the so-called religious life; we want to achieve reality, we want to get nearer to God, closer to heaven, and all the rest of it. The same urge exists there as in this world: we want to *be* somebody.

Now, is it possible for the mind to be totally free of envy, not just partially or in patches? It is not possible for you because you think you must live as you are living now, and you block yourself by saying "It is impossible, I have to live in this world". But the man who really sees what is happening in the world, who sees the misery, the struggle, the utter futility of it all, can inquire and find out that it is possible to be free of envy, not only in the superficial layers of the conscious mind, but also in the unconscious, which is much more conservative than the conscious mind. Only the mind that is totally free from envy is capable of understanding what is the religious life and why it is necessary to have a religious life, and such a mind knows the state of being sacred; therefore it need not go to any temple, church or priest. It has no need of any book, because in itself it is understanding; it has an incorruptible treasure. Such a life is possible. But the mind that wants to be envious and says that it is necessary to live in this world, will escape into a religion which has no value at all; it will go to the church or the temple and do whatever it is told. To such a mind religion is just a toy. But a mind that really inquires—and the mind is not free to inquire as long as it is envious—will know what it is to have a profoundly religious life, which has nothing whatever to do with any belief, with any ritual or dogma, with any prayer; because then the mind in itself is the religious life.

*Question*: *To me the greatest fear is the fear of death. How am I to get over this fear?*

KRISHNAMURTI: This is a very complex question and needs very careful understanding. Most of us are afraid of death, so we believe in a life hereafter, in reincarnation, and cling to various comforting ideologies.

Now, what is it we are afraid of, sirs? I am just thinking aloud for you. I am not telling you what to believe or not to believe—that would be stupid, it would be childish, immature. But if you and I go into the problem together, as we are doing now, then what you discover will be yours, not mine. It will be your truth, your understanding, and it will free you from the fear of death.

Death is a fact, obviously. Through use the physical organism wears out, and its end is inevitable. We see death every day in so many forms, but that is not what we are afraid of. We are afraid of something else. What is it we are afraid of? Have you ever thought about it, sirs? Watch your own mind, your reactions, not just my explanations. Surely, we are afraid of not continuing; isn't that it? I have lived in this world twenty, thirty, fifty, or even eighty years; I have accumulated so much knowledge, so many memories; I have suffered and learned so much, and I still want to

do so much more. Though there has been frustration, I still long to fulfil, and my life is much too short; so I want to lengthen it. But I know that through disease, old age, or accident, death is inevitable. Even if, through some medical process, I were to live three hundred years, death would still be awaiting me at the end.

So my mind is concerned with continuity, the continuity of my name, my family, my property, my friendships, of the virtues I have gathered, and so on. These are the things which I know; and there is death, which I do not know. So what I am fundamentally afraid of is the known meeting the unknown. Meeting the unknown is death, and continuity is all that I know. From the moment I am born to the moment I die, I know only this continuity of memory, and the responses according to that memory. My friends, my family, my job, my social position, my virtues, my belief in God—these are a series of memories and associations with regard to which the mind says "This is I". It is these memories and associations that make up the 'me', the self, the ego—and this is what one wants to continue. Sirs, if someone could guarantee that by some miraculous process you would continue indefinitely, then you would have no fear.

But life is not so simple as all that, is it? You have your beliefs, your conclusions. All the religions say there is resurrection, reincarnation, or some other form of continuity; yet the sting of fear goes on. The problem, therefore, is how to die, not eventually but *now*; to know death while living, and not when death is upon us through old age, disease, or accident. To know death *now* is to experience a sense of not continuing; it is to enter the house of death willingly, knowingly, with full consciousness. When your mind no longer thinks in terms of continuing, when it dies every day to everything that it has gathered, then you will know what it means to meet the unknown, which is death. I hope I am making myself clear.

What is it that we want to continue? Our memories, our struggles, our pains, our joys, our recognition of friends. We see that memories, knowledge, the things of yesterday, move through the present as a passage to the future, and that is all we want; yet we know there is death, an ending. We are afraid of that ending only when we think in terms of continuing, when we say "I must fulfil my ambition, I must become somebody, I must be famous, I must be the greatest this or that". As long as there is the desire for continuity, there will be fear; and if you observe you will see that that which continues is never creative. Only that which knows an ending has a beginning which is new.

Is it possible to die every day and not wait for the ultimate death, to die to everything that you have known? Try it and you will see how extraordinarily subtle and vital it becomes, how your mind is made new, fresh. That which has an ending alone has a renewal, not the mind which continues, which knows a thousand yesterdays. To the mind which continues, the present is only a passage to the future, and such a mind is caught in the bondage of time. That sense of continuity is the ego, the 'me', with which the mind identifies itself. The link of identification with property, with people, with ideas, is merely memory, and that memory is what we want to continue.

I say there will always be fear unless you know what death is now, even though you are not now suffering, diseased, or involved in an accident. What matters is to experience directly for yourself the ending of everything

you have known, so that your mind meets the unknown. It is not so very difficult; only the explanation is difficult. If you really observe and are aware of how your mind operates, you will know that in wanting to continue the mind is like a gramophone record which is everlastingly repeating. Only the mind that is silent, that is free from the past, can know the new, the eternal, the timeless; and such a mind is not concerned with the hereafter.

There is another point which is very interesting if you go into it. Is there a continuity of the mind which does not want to know death now? You are afraid of death, you are nervous, anxious, or you have never thought about it, and you die. Is there the continuity of such a mind? Obviously there is a continuity of the thoughts you are thinking. You have identified yourself with your property, with your wife, and so on, and this identification through recognition sets going a process of thinking like a vibration or a wave which has its own continuity and which can be got into touch with through mediums and all the rest of it. But that has no vitality, it is all silly and superficial.

What we are concerned with is something totally different: is it possible to be free from the fear of death? There is freedom from the fear of death only when you know death in the *now*. It does not mean that you go and commit suicide, but you find out whether the mind, which is the result of time, of many thousands of years, of all the joys, sorrows, pains and endeavours of man—whether such a mind can end, that is, see the unimportance of continuity. You may have a wife and children, and some property; but if you are not identified with any of that, if you die to it all in full vigour, with full comprehension, with a vitality which has its own reward, then you will find that there is no longer fear; then the mind is already in that state in which the unknown *is*. It is not the virtuous, respectable mind that will know the eternal—for the virtue that is cultivated is no virtue—, but only the mind made innocent because it is free, no longer tethered to the past; and for such a mind there is no fear.

*January* 16, 1957.

## III

### TALK IN COLOMBO

Considering the critical world situation and seeing the extraordinary conflict that is going on both outwardly and within ourselves, and being aware also of all the pressures—economic, social and religious—to which we are subject, it seems to me essential to bring about a fundamental change in the life of each one of us. I do not think that most of us appreciate the importance of such a revolution—a revolution that is uninfluenced and not dependent on any circumstances. This fundamental, radical change is not dependent on time, and therefore it has something of the quality of the eternal. But most of us are inclined to wait for change through social reforms, through governmental legislation and outward scientific progress, and so we are always dependent. The changes which are so obviously essential will somehow be brought about, we hope, through the pressure of society, through some kind of vague new educational system, or through social upheaval; but any such change is merely an adaptation to circumstances, and I don't think that adaptation, though it has a certain value, is really a change at all, because it does not free the mind to inquire deeply into

the reality and the creativity of this thing called life.

Revolution, this inward change which is not brought about by outward invitation or compulsion, is possible only when there is self-knowledge. That is, if I don't know the ways of my own mind, the pressures, motives, compulsions, traditions that guide my thought and feeling, both consciously and unconsciously—if I don't know the totality of myself, then any form of change is really a modified continuity of what has been. Without knowing the whole content of myself, change is no change at all; it is merely an adaptation, a convenience, a conformity, a following of custom, tradition.

So, to bring about a radical change—and a radical change is essential when the crisis is totally new and imminent—there must be self-knowledge; and self-knowledge is not the knowledge that is gathered from books, from a system of philosophy, or from some religious teacher. Self-knowledge comes through observing myself from day to day, from moment to moment, through knowing the urges, the compulsions that spring from the unconscious, and through being aware of my gestures, the way I talk, the manner of my thinking, the anatomy of my feeling. If I don't know all that, then obviously any change is merely a modified continuity of what has been, and it therefore conditions my future action. I think it is important for each one of us to understand this.

Religion should essentially teach man to be a light unto himself and not depend on another, on any church, saviour, or system of thought. I think that is clear. Yet the whole social and religious structure which we have built around us makes us dependent; it has become an instrument of compulsion to ourselves and to others. Religions have emphasized, have they not?, the importance of rituals, of systems, of beliefs and dogmas; so you have been led away from the one essential fact, which is that you must know yourself. When you know yourself completely you will find that you don't need a guide, because you yourself are the guide, and then there is a total action which operates because the mind is free from every form of fear, whether conscious or unconscious. The mind is then the instrument of this total action, and not the creator of total action. I don't know if I am making myself clear.

In thinking of complete action, most of us want to act in a manner which will be free of contradictions, free of regrets and the fear of future punishment. We want every action to be a total response of our whole being. Because we see the confusion, the misery, the contradiction, the innumerable difficulties that arise from conditioned action, we try to find an action which will be total and in which this misery, this contradiction can never exist. So the mind, in seeking a total action, inquires, studies, suffers, and possesses an idea which it thinks is total action. That is why you study philosophy, seek out *gurus*, and all the rest of it: you feel that if you can find a total way of acting, all these contradictions and miseries will not arise. But I say the mind cannot find total action except through self-knowledge. And when through self-knowledge the mind is free, then total action will operate through the mind; the mind will not have to seek it. I think it is important to understand this.

You don't really know yourself. To know yourself is to know the extraordinary capacity of your own mind, to uncover the recesses of your own heart; it is to know how your mind operates, and whether your thinking is action or mere reaction; it is to be aware of the intricacies of the unconscious and see

all the intimations and hints that the unconscious is projecting into the conscious. But you are not aware of all that, you are just operating on the surface and going through the routine of daily existence. You go to the office, do your work, and return, carrying on day after day in the same old pattern; and you do not want any disturbance of that pattern, which means that you are superficially satisfied. When you are disturbed superficially, you seek further satisfaction, so your life remains on the superficial level. Though you may meditate, read the scriptures, think of God, it is all on the surface. Your mind is like a gramophone record repeating a song you have heard. It is not even your song, it is the song of another; and there may be no 'your song', but only 'the song'.

So it is very important to understand not only the conscious, but also the unconscious mind. The unconscious mind is much more powerful, much more insistent, much more directive and conservative than the conscious mind; because the conscious is merely the educated mind which adjusts itself to the environment. I do not know if you have noticed a priest riding on the bus or on a motorbike. This situation is quite contradictory, if you come to think of it. He is adjusting himself, as you do, to the environment, to the pressure from outside, but inwardly he is the same—that is, the unconscious is still the residue of the past.

Sirs, if I may suggest it, watch your own minds; do not merely listen to my words, but through my words observe the operation of your own thinking and discover yourself. I am describing the picture, but it is your picture, not mine. If you really watch yourself as you listen, you will find a radical change taking place in spite of your conscious mind. It is like a seed that, being sown in fertile soil, pushes through the earth and puts out a blossom. So may I respectfully and persistently ask you to listen so that through the activity of listening you find out the real facts, the truth about yourself. The discovery of that truth will liberate the mind, and then you will not have to pursue the truth which liberates.

The unconscious mind is the residue of all that has been for centuries past; it is the storehouse of tradition, the inheritance of the race, and to bring about a radical change there, is much more difficult than to change on the surface. Look at yourselves, sirs, and you will observe a very simple fact: that though you have motorcars, modern buses, gramophones, recording machines, and all the rest of it, inwardly you are steeped in a thousand, or ten thousand years of tradition. The unconscious is much more conservative than the conscious mind, much more traditional, and therefore far less capable of real transformation.

So it is very important to understand the unconscious, not merely to scratch on the surface of the mind and think you have understood yourself. To understand the unconscious as well as the conscious mind, there must be a sense of watchfulness which is spontaneous and not enforced. If you watch a child with condemnation, with criticism, with a sense of comparison, what happens? The child feels it and becomes paralyzed, he freezes in his action. You must have noticed it. Whereas, if you begin to play with the child and let him do what he likes, then, even though you are there, he feels free to carry on in his own way, and then you can study him.

Similarly, if the mind watches itself with condemnation, with justification, with a sense of comparison, and so on, then the thinking process freezes and your thoughts become still; but that is not stillness, the mind is simply afraid

to move. On the other hand, if you watch with the ease of spontaneity, with the ease of familiarity, without any sense of comparing or justifying, then you will see that the totality of your mind begins to uncover itself. You do not have to uncover it, nor does the conscious mind have to uncover the unconscious. The mind will uncover itself, just as the child begins to play in your presence because he has confidence in you. So the unconscious as well as the conscious mind begins to uncover itself if you approach it without any sense of direction, opposition or identification; and in this state of awareness you will find that the mind is learning the content of itself.

Learning is not possible if there is accumulation of what has been learnt. Please follow this. The mind is capable of learning only when there is no accumulation. The moment there is accumulation, which is knowledge, learning ceases, because knowledge interprets what is being learned. Perhaps this is something new and therefore rather difficult, so please pay a little attention. At present you know only one state, the state of being taught, of being told; and a mind that has been taught is incapable of learning, because it can move only along the line of what it has been taught. The teaching may give it an opportunity to inquire, but only in a positive or negative direction. A mind that has been taught cannot learn, because learning is a new process. You cannot learn if you already know. What is there to learn? Only the mind that does not know, that has not accumulated, is capable of learning.

Most of us are incapable of learning because our minds are filled with things known. When the mind moves in the field of the known it is not learning; we think it is learning, but in actuality it is merely accumulating or furthering what has been, which is knowledge. To be capable of learning, the mind must be free of this knowledge—the knowledge of what it has been told, of what it has learnt. That is why it is tremendously important to know the content of your own mind.

Truth, reality, God, or whatever name you may like to give it, is not something to be learnt; you cannot come to it with knowledge. The mind must be free of the known if it is to know the unknowable; and the difficulty for most of us is that we think we can arrive at the unknown by moving from the known to the known. There must be self-knowledge, which means learning about yourself as you live from moment to moment; and you cannot learn about yourself if you begin with what you learned yesterday and carry on with that in order to understand more. There is a possibility of learning about yourself only when there is the death of what you have already learnt.

Sirs, please pay a little attention to this, because when there is the understanding of yourself, out of that comes an extraordinary sense of release, of complete freedom from fear. This freedom from fear gives an astonishingly vital energy to the mind, and you need this energy if your mind is to be in a state of complete silence so that it is capable of receiving that which is true. You need great energy for the mind to be still—not dull, but still. A petty mind may think about stillness, but it is not still; it may meditate on silence, but silence is not. This silence, this tranquillity, this peace comes only through learning about and understanding yourself, so that the mind is in that state of energy which brings stillness. Then only is it possible for the eternal to be.

In considering these questions together, please bear in mind that we are

not looking for *an* answer; because the solution lies in the problem itself, and not away from the problem.

*Question: You say that the mind will be free when the thinking process ceases. Hinduism and Buddhism advocate various practices towards this end. What method do you advocate?*

KRISHNAMURTI: Let us first examine this whole question of pursuing a method in order to achieve a result—a psychological, not a factual result. We are not now considering how to end the process of thinking. We shall come to that later.

What do you mean when you say that the practising of a method, a system, will give you what you want, very subtly or very obviously? I want peace of mind, and the various religions, including Buddhism and Hinduism, say "Do these things and you will get it". So day after day I practise a particular method, I sit in meditation, controlling my mind, suppressing unwanted thoughts, and so on. I go through all this, hoping to arrive at a state of mind which I call peace.

Now, what does a method or a system do when you practise it? What is the effect on your mind of practising a method, whether it be a first-class super-method, or a very stupid one? Surely, the effect is to make the mind conform to a pattern of thinking, which is to force it to function in the groove of a particular habit. That is all the method is concerned with. And a mind that is functioning in the groove of habit is not a mind at all, it is merely a mechanism that repeats the same operation day after day.

Do please understand this, sirs. Though a method may promise you bliss, heaven, nirvana, or God, that method does not free the mind; it only enslaves the mind to itself. A mind that practises a method obviously conforms to it. So the method becomes the means of holding the mind within a pattern of thinking; and a mind that thinks in terms of a pattern, a habit, is never capable of being free. If you really understand this, not because I say it but because you see the truth of it for yourself, then you will find that you are free of all methods. No method, however 'good' it may be, can free you; on the contrary, all methods are essentially the same in that they enslave you to themselves. The mind that conforms to any method, to any authority, ceases to function as a free mind, and is therefore incapable of inquiring into what is truth.

I am just pointing out the fact, and I hope it is clear. You can either look at or disregard the fact, it is up to you. If you look at the fact and go into it sanely, reasonably, without any prejudice, you are bound to see that all methods, whether Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, or what you will, condition the mind, and that through a method the mind can never be free. Then comes the problem: How is one to free the mind from the thinking process? I am using that word 'how' as an inquirer, I am not asking for a method through which to free the mind.

Now, why do you want thought to come to an end? Is it because you have been told or have read that in ending the thought-process you will come to something much greater—which means that you are seeking a reward? Or do you want to end thought because you understand the significance of thinking?

What is the significance of thinking? Is thinking the means to a real discovery of what is truth, what is God, what is beyond the measure of the mind? If it is, then we must think completely, fully. But if thinking is

not the key that opens the door, then obviously we must put it away.

What do you mean by thinking? When I ask you that question, the whole mechanism of thinking is set going, is it not? My question awakens in your mind a series of associations, memories. Memory responds, and then you give your reply. So what you call thinking is always, and not just when a question is asked, the response of memory; and the response of memory is conditioned thinking. You think as a Sinhalese, as a Buddhist, or a Christian, as a man or a woman, as a business-man or a lawyer. The whole mechanism of your mind is conditioned by the knowledge which you have gathered as a professional or a so-called religious person, by the things you have been trained in, and from that background you think. The background, which is memory, tradition, responds to challenge, and that response, through words, is what you call thinking. This is comparatively simple. Since thinking is the response of memory, and memory is always conditioned, thinking can never be free. There is no such thing as free thinking, because thinking is always associated with the past.

So thinking can never be free. That is a discovery, sirs, not a statement that you have learnt from me. If you have really listened you will find it a tremendous shock and discovery to realize that all thinking about a problem, whether personal or scientific, immediate or in the future, is conditioned by the past, which is memory, and that a human being who would discover something new must put memory aside. He may use memory afterwards, but to use memory to discover is to be conditioned, and a conditioned mind can never find out what is true. The function of thinking is not discovery, but to put into action what has been discovered. Seeing the truth of that, the mind says "Thought must end"—which is not to confine, suppress, or sublimate thought, but to realize that thought as a process must come to an end. Thought comes to an end only through self-knowledge, that is, when you understand the whole process of thinking and don't just say "I must end thought", which is an immature statement without any validity or significance.

A petty mind thinks "I must end thinking in order to find truth". Such a mind is still petty, and it will never find truth. But when the mind says "I am petty and I must understand this whole process of thinking", which is true self-knowledge, then it is no longer petty. Such a mind understands the significance of thinking, and therefore it is free from the thought-process. Being totally still, the mind is made new, fresh, innocent. Only the mind that has put away and is free of the known is capable of receiving the unknown. Such a mind is not the observer of the unknown, it is not a receptacle of the unknown; it is the unknown itself.

*Question: You say that the conditioning of the mind, with which we approach all our problems, breeds conflict and prevents the understanding of truth. How can the mind be unconditioned?*

KRISHNAMURTI: It is a fact that the mind is conditioned which thinks in terms of Buddhism, Christianity, Communism, Hinduism, or any other organized belief, whether it be socio-political, or a belief in God. Do you understand, sirs? You can be conditioned to believe in God, and another group of people can be conditioned *not* to believe in God, which is obvious. The Communist does not believe in

God, he says it is all tommyrot, it is just the way you have been educated, it is a form of escape; you have merely accepted what you have been told. But the Communist himself accepts what he has been told; he too has his books, his leaders, his authorities. He has been conditioned to believe in no-God, just as you have been conditioned to believe in God or in something else. Both are conditioned, obviously. Your conditioning is not superior, nor is his inferior. There is no nobler or less noble conditioning; there is only the fact that the mind is conditioned. You can observe this fact in daily life if you are aware of the functioning of your own mind. You think along a certain line. As a Buddhist or a Christian you will do or not do certain things, just as a Communist will do or not do certain other things; so both minds are conditioned.

Now, the questioner wants to know how to free the mind from its conditioning. First of all, sirs, you must know that your mind is conditioned. The mind cannot free itself till it knows it is conditioned. If I am blind, I must know that I am blind before I can do something about my blindness; otherwise, my talking about blindness has very little value.

Similarly, you must know for yourself that your mind is conditioned, and you must also find out in what manner it is conditioned. You think as a Sinhalese or a Hindu, you have certain customs, a certain social morality, certain ways of approaching problems, a certain disregard for women; you feel contempt for the servant and respect for the big man, which is reflected in the manner of your speech. All this is your conditioning, which is the result of the tradition in which you have been brought up, whether that tradition is comparatively new or ten thousand years old. You cannot be aware of your conditioning if you oppose it, if you think it is right or wrong, good or bad, noble or ignoble, if you say "This I will keep, that I will throw away". Whereas, if the mind approaches the totality of its conditioning without condemnation or justification, then that very approach will free the mind from conditioning. When you know that you are functioning in the groove of tradition, and realize how stupid it is, it drops away, you don't have to struggle against it.

But the difficulty is that you find profit, pleasure in tradition, in being conditioned; you find it is a safe thing; so the unconscious, which is very conservative, hesitant, holds you. Conditioning involves the totality of your thinking-feeling, whether pleasurable or painful; and when you realize that you cannot seek pleasure and discard pain, then you will find that, because you understand the whole import of conditioning, the mind is free of conditioning; you do not have to do a thing about it. No effort on the part of the mind to uncondition itself can bring about freedom from conditioning, because all such effort is born of conditioning; you have been told from childhood that you must make an effort in order to be free. But if you understand the whole process of conditioning, there is freedom, you don't have to make an effort to be free.

*Question: Is it not desirable to revive the great religions and the glorious cultures associated with them, since in their pure form they have helped many people towards the spiritual life?*

KRISHNAMURTI: When there is confusion there is always the urge to revive the past, because it is the safe thing to do. All over the Christian world they are shouting that Christianity must be

revived, and apparently you are doing the same thing here, saying that the ancient religions must be revived.

Now, can the ancient religions be revived? What do you mean by religion? Surely, religion has nothing whatever to do with dogmas, beliefs, rituals, nor with the authority-bound mentality of the priest. Organized belief has been built up for the profit of the few in the name of the many, and that is obviously not religion. Religion is something entirely different. Religion is love; and can love be 'revived'? To be religious is just to love people, to be kind, to be generous, not to hate, not to be ambitious, not to be envious, to have sympathy, to have compassion; and can these things be 'revived'? Can you go back and bring the dead books, the dead traditions, to life? Or is it that love cannot be revived, because love is only in the present, not in the past or the future? Love is not something that you can get through practice. You can love, be compassionate, only in the present, in the immediate. It is because you do not love, because you are confused, that you seek to revive something which is dead. If you had love you would never talk about revival. A living man does not talk about revival; he is living. It is the dead man who wants to put life into himself—the so-called life that had made him die.

So religion is not organization, religion is not authority, religion is not dogma, ritual, or belief; nor is it the knowledge accumulated through the past. Religion is a state of living in the present; it is to understand the whole process, the totality of time. This understanding frees the mind from fear, and only then does the mind know what it is to love. A mind that loves does not seek God or truth, because love itself is truth. To be completely attentive is the good. The mind *that* cultivates virtue is *not* a virtuous mind. Love cannot be revived. Only dead things can be revived, in the sense that you can pump life into them hoping they will *live*. They never will. Let the dead lie dead. Be concerned with the living. That *is* much more difficult, because it demands great clarity, sympathy, generosity, love.

*January* 20, 1957.

## IV

### TALK IN COLOMBO

One of our greatest difficulties is that we do not like to be disturbed, especially when we are a people steeped in tradition, in the easy ways of life, and with a culture that has merely become repetitive. Perhaps you have noticed that we put up a great deal of resistance to anything that is new. We do not want to be disturbed; and if we *are* disturbed, we soon adjust ourselves to a new pattern and again settle down, only to be again shaken, disturbed and troubled. So we go on through life, always being driven from a pattern into which we have settled down. The mind objects most violently and defensively to any suggestion of a change from within. It is willing to be compelled by economic, scientific, or political forces to adjust itself to a new environment, but inwardly it remains the same. One can observe this process going on if one is at all aware of things about one and within oneself.

And religion, it seems to me, is the most disturbing state of mind. It is not something from which to get comfort, solace, an easy explanation of the sorrows, travails and tribulations of life; on the contrary, religion demands a mind that is extraordinarily alert, questioning, doubting, inquiring, that does not accept at all. The truth of

religion is to be discovered individually, it can never be made universal. And yet, if you observe, you will see that religions throughout the world have become universal—universal in the sense that a large number of people follow them and adhere to their ideas, beliefs, dogmas, rituals; therefore they cease to be religion at all.

Religion, surely, is the search for truth on the part of each one of us, and not merely the acceptance of what has been said by another—it does not matter *who* it is, whether the Buddha, the Christ, or any other. They may point out certain things; but merely to repeat what has been said by them is so immature, it is merely verbal and without much significance. To discover the truth, that reality which is beyond the measure of thought, the mind must be disturbed, shaken out of its habits, its easy acceptance of a philosophy, a system of thought. As the mind is made up of all our thoughts, feelings and activities, conscious as well as unconscious, it is our only instrument of inquiry, of search, of discovery, and to allow it to settle down and function in a groove seems to me a heinous crime. It is of the utmost importance that we should be disturbed—and we *are* being disturbed externally. The impact of the West on the East is a shock, a disturbing element. Outwardly, superficially, we are adjusting ourselves to it, and we think we are making progress inwardly; but if you observe you will see that inwardly we are not seeking at all.

Seeking has an extraordinary significance in the life of the individual. Most of us seek with a motive. When we seek with a motive, the motive dictates the end of the search; and when a motive dictates the end, is there a search at all? It seems to me that to seek the realization of what you already know or have formulated, is not search. There is search only when you do not know, when there is no motive, no compulsion, no escape, and only then is there a possibility of discovering that which is truth, reality, God.

But most of us are seeking with a motive, are we not? If you observe your own way of life, your own manner of thinking and feeling, you will see that most of us are discontented with ourselves and our environment, and we want to direct this discontent along easy channels till we find contentment. A mind that is pursuing satisfaction, easily finds a way of overcoming discontent, and such a mind is obviously incapable of discovering what is truth. Discontent is the only force that makes you move, inquire, search. But the moment you canalize it and try to find contentment or fulfilment through any means, obviously you go to sleep.

That is exactly what is happening in religious matters. We are no longer on a journey, individually seeking what is truth. We are merely being driven by the collective, which means going to the temple, repeating certain phrases, explanations, and thinking that is religion. Surely religion is something entirely different. It is a state of mind in which the inquirer is not urged by any motive and has no centre from which to start his inquiry. Truth is not to be found through the motive of wanting contentment, peace, something superior in order to be satisfied. I think it is very important to understand this. We have made religion, have we not?, into something which gives us satisfaction, an explanation for our troubles, a solace for our sorrows, for the things that we are, and we easily fit into a satisfying groove of thought, thinking we have solved the problem. There is no individual inquiry on our part, but merely a repetition, a theoretical and not an actual understanding of what *is*.

To find out what is truth we must be free of the collective, which means we must be truly individual—which we are not. I do not know if you have observed how little individual you are. Being an individual is not a matter of character or habit. After all, character is the meeting of the past with the present, is it not? Your character is the result of the past in response to the present, and that response of the past is still the collective.

To put it differently, are you an individual at all? You have a name, a form, a family, you may have a separate house and a personal bank account; but are you inwardly an individual? Or are you merely the collective acting in a certain approved, respectable manner? Observe yourself and you will see that you are not at all an individual. You are a Sinhalese, a Buddhist, a Christian, an Englishman, an Indian, or a Communist, which means that you are the collective; and surely one must be free of the collective, consciously as well as unconsciously, in order to find out what is truth.

To free the mind from the repetitious urge of the collective requires very hard work, and only a mind thus free is capable of discovering what is truth. This actually does happen when you are vitally interested in something. You put aside all the imaginations, ideas and struggles of the past, and you push forward to inquire. But in religious matters you do not. There you are conservative, you are the collective, you think in terms of the mass, of what you have been told about nirvana, samadhi, moksha, heaven, or what you will. There is no individual endeavour to discover wholly for yourself. I think such individual endeavour is very important, especially in the present world crisis, because it is only this individual search that will release the creative and open the door to reality. As long as we are not real individuals, as long as we are merely the reaction of the past, as most of us are, life remains a series of repetitive responses without much significance. But if in our search we endeavour as indivduals to find out what is truth, then a totally new energy, a totally different kind of creation comes into being.

I do not know if you have ever experimented with yourself by watching your own mind and seeing how it accumulates memory. From memory you act, from knowledge there is action. Knowledge is, after all, experience, and this experience dictates future experience. So you will find that experience does not liberate at all; on the contrary, experience strengthens the past. A mind that would liberate itself from the past must understand this whole process of accumulating knowledge through experience, which conditions the mind. The centre from which you think, the 'me', the self, the ego, is a bundle of memories, and you are nothing else but that. You may think you are the Atman, the soul, but you are still cultivating memory, and that memory projects the coming experience, which further conditions the mind. So experience strengthens the 'me', the self, which is in essence memory—'my house', 'my qualities', 'my character', 'my race', 'my knowledge', and the whole structure which is built around that centre. In seeking reality through experience, the mind only further conditions itself and does not liberate itself from that centre.

Now, is it possible for the mind not to accumulate knowledge around the centre, and so be capable of discovering truth from moment to moment? Because it is only the truth discovered from moment to moment that is really important, not the truth which you have already experienced and which, having become a memory, creates the urge to further experience.

There are *two* kinds of knowledge: there is the factual knowledge of how to build a bridge, all the scientific information that has accumulated through the centuries, and there is knowledge as psychological memory. These two forms of knowledge are not clearly defined. One operates through the other. But it is psychological memory of which the 'me', the self is made up; and is it possible for the mind to be free of that memory? Is it possible for the mind not to think in terms of accumulation, in terms of gathering experience, but to move without that centre? Can we live in this world without the operation of the self, which is a bundle of psychological memories? You will find, if you really inquire into it deeply, that such a thing is possible, and then you can use factual knowledge without creating the havoc which is being created now. Then factual knowledge does not breed antagonism between man and man.

At present there is antagonism, there is hate, separation, anxiety, war, and all the rest of it, because psychologically you are using factual knowledge for self-aggrandizement, for a separative existence. One can see very well in the world that religions divide people—religions being idea, belief, dogma, ritual, not the feeling of love, of compassion. Such religions separate people, just as nationalism does. What is separating us, then, is not factual knowledge, but the knowledge upon which we depend psychologically for our emotional comfort, for our inward security.

So a mind that would find reality, God, or what name you will, must be free of this bundle of memories which is identified as the 'me'. And it is really not so very difficult. This bundle is made up of ambition, greed, envy, the desire to be secure, and if one puts one's mind to the task and works hard, surely one can liberate the mind from this bundle. One can live in this world without ambition, without envy, without hate. We think it is impossible because we have never tried it. It is only the mind that is free from hate, from envy, from separative conclusions, beliefs—it is only such a mind that is capable of discovering that reality which is love, compassion.

*Question*: *What is understanding? Is it awareness? Is it right thinking? If understanding does not come about through the functioning of the mind, then what is the function of the mind?*

KRISHNAMURTI: Sir, there are several things involved in this question. First of all, what is thinking?—not right thinking or wrong thinking. Surely, what we call thinking is the response of memory to any challenge. That is, when I ask you a question, you respond quickly if you are familiar with the answer, or hesitantly, with an interval of time, if you are not. The mind looks into the records of memory within itself, and having found the answer, replies to the question; or, not finding the answer in the records of memory, it says "I don't know".

So thinking is the response of memory, obviously; it is not a very complex thing. You think as a Buddhist, a Sinhalese, a Christian, or a Hindu, because your background is that of a particular culture, race, or religion. If you do not belong to any of these groups and you are a Communist, for example, again you respond according to that particular pattern. This process of response according to a certain background is what you call thinking.

You have discovered, then, that there is no freedom in thinking, because your thinking is dictated by your background. Thinking as you know it now

originates from knowledge, which is memory; it is mechanical because it is the response to challenge of a conditioned mind. There is creativeness, a perception of the new, only when there is no response of memory. In mathematics you may proceed step by step from the known to the known; but if you would go much further and discover something new, the known must for the time being be put in abeyance.

So the functioning of the mind is at present a mechanical response of memory, conscious as well as unconscious. The unconscious is a vast storehouse of accumulated tradition, of racial inheritance, and it is that background which responds to challenge. I think that is fairly obvious.

Now, is there right thinking and wrong thinking? Or is there only freedom from what we call thinking—from which follows right action? Do you understand, sirs? Being brought up in India, Europe, or America, I think in terms of my particular conditioning, according to the way I have been educated. My background tells me what to think, and it also tells me what is right thinking and what is wrong thinking. If I were brought up as a Communist, then for me right thinking would be that which is anti-religious and anti-clerical, according to my Communistic background; any other manner of thinking would be a deviation, and therefore to be liquidated. And is a mind that responds according to its background, which it calls thinking, capable of right action? Or is there right action only when the mind is free from the conditioning whose response it calls thinking? Do you understand, sirs? I hope I am making myself clear.

Most of us do not even ask what is right thinking. We want to know what is right *thought,* because right thinking might be very disturbing, it might demand inquiry, and we do not want to inquire. We want to be told what is right thought; and we *are* told what is right thought by organized religions, by social morality, by philosophies, and by our own experience. We proceed along that line *until* we are no longer satisfied with the pattern of right thought, and then we ask "What is right thinking?"—which means that the mind is a little more active, a little more willing to inquire, to be disturbed. Thinking is fluid, whereas right thought implies a static state; and most of us function in static states.

Now, if we really want to inquire into what is right thinking, we must first find out, not what is right thinking, but what is thinking; and we have seen that what we call thinking is a process of response from the background, from that centre of accumulated memory which is identified as the 'me'. And I say, is there right thinking in that field at all? Or is there right thinking, right response, right action, only when the mind is free from the background?

The questioner wants to know what is understanding. Surely, understanding is this whole process of uncovering the ways of the mind, which is what we have been doing just now. Understanding implies, does it not?, a state of mind that is really inquiring; and you cannot inquire if you start with a conclusion, an assumption, a wish.

Then what is the function of the mind? The mind now functions fragmentarily, in departments, in parts; it does not function as a totality because it is now the instrument of desire, and desire can never be total, whole. Desire is always fragmentary, contradictory. You can easily find out the truth of all this if you observe these things in yourself.

As we know it now, the mind is an instrument of sensation, of gratification,

of desire, and desire is always fragmentary, there can never be total desire. Such a mind, with all its self-contradictory desires, can never be integrated. You cannot put hate and love together; you cannot integrate envy and goodness; you cannot harmonize the opposites. That is what most of us are trying to do, but it is an impossibility. So what is the true function of the mind? Is it not to free itself from the contradictions of desire and be the instrument of an action which is not the mere response of memory?

I am afraid all this sounds rather difficult, but if you really observe yourself, you will find that it is not. I am only describing what actually takes place if you do not suppress, sublimate, or find a substitute for desire, but really understand it. You can understand desire only when there is no condemnation, no comparison. If I want to understand you, for example, I must not condemn, I must not justify, I must not compare you with somebody else; I must simply observe you. Similarly, if it would understand desire, the mind must watch itself without condemnation, without any sense of comparison, which only creates the conflict of duality.

So we see what understanding is. We see that there can be no right thinking, which is right action, as long as the mind is conditioned. There is right action only when the mind is free from conditioning. It is not a matter of right thinking, and then right action. Thinking and action are separate only as long as desire functions as memory, as the pursuit of success; but when there is freedom from that bundle of memories which is identified as the 'me', then there is action which is outside the social pattern. But that is much more complicated, and we shall leave it for the moment.

We see, then, that the function of the mind is to understand, and it cannot understand if it condemns, if it thinks segmentally, in parts. The mind will think in fragments, in compartments, as long as there is desire, whether it be the desire for God or for a car, because desire in itself is contradictory, and any one desire is always in opposition to other desires.

So there can be understanding only when the mind, through self-knowledge, discovers the ways of its own operation. And to discover the ways of the mind's operation there must be awareness, you must watch it as you would watch a child whom you love. You do not condemn or judge the child, you do not compare him with somebody else; you watch in order to understand him. Similarly, you must be aware of the operation of your own mind, see its subtleties, its recesses, its extraordinary depth. Then you will find, if you pursue it further, that the mind becomes astonishingly quiet, very still; and a still mind is capable of receiving that which is truth.

*Question: According to the theory of karma, in which many of us believe, our actions and circumstances in this life are largely governed by what we did in our past lives. Do you deny that we are governed by our karma? What about our duties and responsibilities?*

KRISHNAMURTI: Sir, again, this is a very complex question and it needs thinking out to the very end.

It is not a matter of what you believe. You believe that you are the result of the past, that previous lives have conditioned your present circumstances; and there are others who do not believe in all that. They have been brought up to believe that we live only

one life and are conditioned only by our present environment. So let us for the moment put aside what you believe or do not believe, and let us find out what we mean by karma, which is much more important; because if you really understand what karma is, then you will find it is not a thing which dictates your present action. We shall go into it and you will see.

Now, what do we mean by karma? The word itself, as you know, means to act, to do. You never act without a cause, or without a motive, or without being compelled by circumstances. You act either under the influence of the past, of a thousand yesterdays, or because you are pushed in a particular direction by the pressure of immediate circumstances. That is, there is a cause and an effect. Please follow this a little bit. For example, you have come here to listen to me. The cause is that you want to listen; and the effect of listening you will find out, if you are really interested. But the point is, there is a cause and there is an effect.

Now, is the cause ever fixed, and the effect already determined? Do you understand, sirs? In the case of an acorn, a seed, there is a fixed cause and a fixed effect. An acorn can never become a palm tree, it will always produce an oak. We think in the same way about karma, do we not? Having done something yesterday, which is the cause, I think the effect of that action today is predetermined, fixed. But is it? Is the cause fixed? And is the effect fixed? Does not the effect of a cause become in its turn the cause of still another effect? Do you understand? I do not want to take more examples, because examples do not really clarify the issue, but tend to confuse it. So we must think this out clearly without using examples.

We know that action has a cause. I am ambitious, therefore I do something. There is a cause and there is an effect. Now, does not the effect become the cause of a future action? Surely, there is never a fixed cause, nor a fixed effect. Each effect, undergoing innumerable influences and being transformed by them, becomes the cause of still another effect. So there is never a fixed cause and a fixed effect, but a chain of cause-effect-cause.

Sirs, this is so obvious. You did something yesterday which had its origin in a previous cause, and which will lead to certain consequences to-morrow; but in the meantime the consequences, being subject to innumerable pressures, influences, have undergone a change. You think that a given cause will produce a fixed effect; but the effect is never exactly the same, because something has happened between the two.

So there is a continuous chain of cause becoming effect, and effect becoming cause. If you think in terms of "I was *that* in the past, I am *this* today, and I shall be such-and-such in the next life", it is too immature, utterly silly, because that way of thinking is not fluid, it has no living, vital quality. That is decay, deterioration, death. But if you think about the matter deeply, it is really marvellous, because then you will see that this chain of cause-effect becoming another cause can be broken at any time, and that the mind can be free of karma. Through understanding the whole process of the mind which is conditioned by the past, you will see for yourself that the effect of the past in the present or in the future is never fixed, never absolute, final. To think that it is final is degradation, ignorance, darkness. Whereas, if you see the significance of cause-effect becoming again the cause, then because that whole process is for you a living, moving thing, you can break it at any time; therefore you can be free of the past. You no longer need be a Christian, a

Buddhist, a Hindu, with all the conditioning that goes with it; you can immediately transform yourself.

Sirs, don't you know that with one stroke you can cut away envy? Haven't you ever tried to break antagonism on the spot? I know it is very comforting to sit back and say "Well, it is karma that has made me antagonistic to you". It gives a great sense of satisfaction to say that, the pleasure of continuing hate. But if you perceive the whole significance of karma, then you will see that the chain of cause-becoming-effect-becoming-cause can be snapped. Therefore the mind can be astonishingly and vitally free from the past in the immediate.

But that requires hard work; it requires a great deal of attention, a great deal of inquiry, penetration, self-knowledge. And most of us are indolent, we are so easily satisfied by a belief in karma. Good God! What does it matter whether you believe or not believe? It is what you are now that matters, not what you did in the past and the effects of that in the present. And what are you now? You should know that better than I do. What you are now is obviously the result of the past, the result of innumerable influences, compulsions, the result of food, climate, contact with the West, and so on. Under the pressure of all that, the mind becomes lazy, indolent, easily satisfied by words. Such a mind may talk about truth, God, it may believe in nirvana, and all the rest of it; but that belief has no value at all, any more than has the Communist, the Catholic, or any other belief.

The mind can be transformed only when it understands the whole process of itself, and the motives, the causations of that process. In that understanding there are immense possibilities for the mind, because it opens the door to an astonishing creativity, which is not the writing of a few poems, or the putting of some colours on a canvas, but that state which is reality, God, truth. And for that you need have no ideals. On the contrary, ideals prevent immediate understanding. We are fed on illusions, on things that have no value, and we easily succumb to authority, to religious as well as political tyranny; and how can such a mind discover that which is eternal, that which is beyond the projections of itself? I say it is possible to break this continuity of karma, but only when you understand the operations of karma, which is not static, predetermined, but a living, moving thing; and in breaking itself away from the past, the mind will know what truth or God is.

*January* 23, 1957.

# V

## TALK IN COLOMBO

As I have been pointing out during these talks here, it is surely very important, especially when the world is in such a grave crisis, that we should understand the true significance of religion; because religion, it seems to me, is the only basic solution to all the problems of our existence. I do not mean the religions of dogma, of organized belief, which only condition the mind. To me, they are not religion at all. They are like any other propagandistic organization which merely shapes the mind according to a particular pattern of thinking.

To inquire into the whole question of what is true religion, one must first understand what behaviour is. To me, behaviour is righteousness. But most of us spend our energy and our thought in arguing over what kind of belief we should hold concerning reincarnation and the various other problems involved

in religion; we do not start with the fundamental issue. The foundation of right inquiry is surely behaviour, which is righteousness; and righteousness is not merely the cultivation of virtue. A man who cultivates virtue ceases to be virtuous; a man who practises humility is no longer humble. The cultivation of humility is arrogance. Similarly, cultivated virtue only leads to respectability. We must have virtue, because virtue is essential to all real inquiry, but not the cultivated virtue which is a self-centred activity. What is important is to meet the whole movement of that virtue which is not self-centred and which, if we pursue it deeply, not only at the conscious but also at the unconscious level, does lead to that which is beyond the measure of the mind. This is true religious inquiry, and I think it is very important to understand it.

Most of us are involved in some form of organized belief, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Communism, and so on; and when we are caught in the net of these organizations, whether political or so-called spiritual, we are more concerned, are we not?, with what we believe than with how we live our life. What matters, surely, is not to find out what is the ideal way of living, but rather to discover for ourselves the pattern of behaviour in which the mind is caught and to see the true significance of such behaviour.

Righteousness has nothing whatever to do with organized conduct; because organized conduct, which is social morality, has produced this great confusion and chaos in the world. Society accepts envy, greed, ambition, cruelty, the ruthless pursuit of one's own fulfilment; it admits and justifies the possibility of killing on a large scale. The soldier who kills more than the others in battle is a hero in the eyes of society; and when a society professing a particular religion sanctions killing on a vast and inhuman scale, then obviously the religion which it professes has failed.

To understand righteousness it is necessary to step out of the pattern of society. By society I do not mean the organized means of communication, of supplying food, clothing, shelter, and so on, but the whole psychological or moral issue which is involved in society. A person who seeks to inquire into what is true religion obviously cannot belong to a society which accepts greed, envy, the pursuit of personal ambition, the search for power, fame, and all the rest of it. To belong to a society based on cruelty and the pursuits of self-interest, and still be religious, is obviously impossible. Yet organized religions throughout the world have condoned such a society. Organized religions do not insist that you step out of greed, envy, ruthlessness. They are far more concerned with what you believe, with ritual, organization, property, and all the rest of the confusion, paraphernalia and rigmarole that exist in and around every organized religion.

So a man who would inquire into what is true religion must lay the foundation of righteousness by being without envy, without ambition, without the greed for power. This is an actual possibility, I am not being idealistic. Ideals and actuality are incompatible. A man who pursues the ideal of non-violence is indulging in violence. He is concerned, not with ceasing to be violent, but with ultimately arriving at a state which he calls non-violence. Being violent, the mind has an ideal of non-violence which is over there in the distance; it will take time to achieve that state, and in the meantime the mind can continue to be violent. Such a mind is not concerned with getting rid of violence, but with slowly trying to become non-violent. The two states are entirely different, and I think it is

very important to understand this fact. The ending of a quality such as violence or greed is not a matter of time, and it does not come about through ideals; it has to be done immediately, not through time. We get caught up in the gradualism of ideals when we are concerned with time.

Please do not jump to conclusions or say "Without ideals I shall be lost", but rather listen to what is being said. I know all the arguments, all the justifications of ideals. Just listen, if you kindly will, without a conclusion, and try to understand what the speaker is talking about; do not block your understanding by saying "I must have ideals".

Ideals have existed for centuries. Various religious teachers have talked of ideals, but they may all be wrong and probably are. To adhere to an ideal is obviously to postpone freeing the mind from violence, greed, envy, ambition and the desire for power. If one is concerned, as one should be, with righteousness, which is the foundation upon which rests all true inquiry into what religion is, then one must investigate the possibility of ridding the mind of violence, of greed, of envy, of acquisitiveness, not at some time in the distant future, but now. It is entirely possible for the mind to be free immediately of these and all the related qualities that society has imposed on us —or rather, that we have cultivated in our relationship with each other. which is society.

Righteousness or behaviour is not something to be gained, to be arrived at, but it must be understood from moment to moment in the actuality of daily living. That is why it is important to have self-knowledge, to know how you think, how you feel, how you act, how you respond to another. All that indicates the manner of your approach to life, and therein lies the foundation of righteousness, not in some Utopia, ideal, or organized belief. The actual foundation must be laid in our daily living. But most of us are not concerned with that; we are concerned with the label which we call religion.

If you and I as individuals really put our minds to this, we shall see that change does not come about through ideals, through time, through pressure and convenience, or through any form of political activity, but only through being deeply concerned with bringing about a radical transformation in ourselves. Then we shall discover that it is possible to free the mind from violence, greed, and all the rest of it, not in time, but outside of time; because virtue or righteousness is not an end in itself. If virtue is an end in itself it becomes a self-centred activity leading to mere respectability; and a mind that is merely respectable is imitative, it conforms to a pattern and is therefore not free.

Virtue is merely a matter of putting the mind in order, like putting a house in order, and nothing more than that. When the mind is in order, when it has clarity and is without confusion, without conflict, then it is possible to go further. But for a man who is seeking power, who is burning inwardly with ambition, greed, envy, cruelty, and all the rest of it—for such a man to talk about religion and God, is arrant nonsense, it has no meaning. His God is only the God of respectability.

That is why it is important to lay the foundation of righteousness, which is to step out of the present society. Stepping out of society does not mean becoming a hermit, a monk, or a sannyasi, but being without greed, without envy, without violence, without the desire for position and power. The moment you are without those things you are out of time, out of the society which is made up of them.

So the real revolution is religious, it is this stepping out of the present society, not remaining within the field of society and trying to modify it. Most revolutions are concerned with the modification of society, but to me that is not revolution at all; it is merely the perpetuation of the past in another form. The religious revolution is the only revolution, which is individually to step out of this complex society based on envy, greed, power, anger, violence and brutality in the relationship between human beings.

It is only when the mind is free from violence, and from all this business of trying to cultivate virtue, that it is capable of inquiring into what is truth, what is God—if there *is* God. It does not assume anything. When the mind is capable of such inquiry, that inquiry is devotion. Devotion is not attachment to some idol, to some picture, person, or symbol. But when the mind has freed itself from envy and greed, when it has put its own house in order, which is virtue, and is therefore capable of inquiring to find out what is true and whether there is something beyond the measure of the mind—then that inquiry, that perseverance is true devotion, without which there is irreverence and disrespect.

So the man who would be religious cannot belong to any organized belief, which only conditions the mind, but must be concerned with behaviour, which is righteousness—his own behaviour, not that of others. Most of us are so eager to reform others and so little concerned with the transformation of ourselves. What matters is not how others behave, your friend, your wife, or your husband, but how *you* behave.

If you consider this matter really seriously, you will find that education comes to have quite a different significance. What we call education now is merely a process of being trained to earn a livelihood as a lawyer, a doctor, a soldier, a businessman, a scientist, or what you will, and that is all most of us are concerned with. Such education is obviously very superficial, and so our lives are equally superficial. But if we understand *this* inquiry into what is true religion, into what is reality, God, then we shall help the children, the coming generation, to grow in freedom so that they do not become machines in the routine of an office, or mere bread-winners, but are able to throw off the tyranny of organized belief, the tyranny of governments, and thereby to reshape the world. Then the whole structure, not only of our education, but of our culture, of our behaviour, of our relationship, will be entirely different. Again, this is not an ideal, a thing to be vaguely hoped for in the future.

So it seems to me very important that those of us who are serious—and I hope there are some who are serious—should be concerned with the understanding of ourselves. This is not a self-centred activity. It becomes a self-centred activity only when you are concerned with the understanding of yourself in order to arrive somewhere: in order to achieve freedom, to find God, not to be jealous, and so on. If you are concerned with God, or with sex, or with the attainment of power, your mind is occupied; and an occupied mind is obviously self-centred, though it may be occupied with God. You have to understand the whole process of self-knowledge, that is, you have to know yourself; and you cannot know yourself if you are not aware, observant, conscious of your words, of your gestures, of your manner of speech in relationship with another. To be aware in your relationship with another is to observe the way you talk to women, the way you talk to your wife, to your children, to the bus conductor,

to the policeman; it is to see how respectful you are to the governor, and how contemptuous you are of the servant. To be aware is to be conscious of the operation of your own mind; but you cannot be aware if you condemn what you discover.

You *will* find that out of this self-knowledge comes a well-ordered mind—which is *being* virtuous, not becoming virtuous. Such a mind is capable of stillness because it is no longer in contradiction with itself, it is no longer driven or riven by desire. To be still requires a great deal of energy, and energy is depleted when the mind is self-contradictory, when it is not aware of its own operation, which means there is no self-knowledge. There is the depletion of energy as long as desire pulls in different directions; but such depletion of energy ceases when there is total self-knowledge. Then you will find that the mind, being full of energy, is capable of being completely still; and a still mind can receive that which is eternal.

Many questions have been sent in—questions about sex, about organized belief, about what kind of education the serious parent should give to his children, and so on. It is obviously impossible to answer all of them, because each question is very complex and cannot just be answered 'yes' or 'no'. Life has no 'yes' or 'no' answers. However, during these talks, representative questions have been dealt with, and if you care to go into what has already been said, I think you will find the answer to your particular question. Books have been printed, and you may be interested in them—or you may not. That is your affair. But if you have sufficiently paid attention to what has been said, I think you will answer your questions for yourself. To find the right solution to a problem, no effort is required. Effort denies the understanding of the problem. Whereas, if you are really serious about inquiring into the problem, then you will find that the problem resolves itself.

*Question: Religions have prescribed certain practices in meditation for one's spiritual growth. What practice do you advocate? Can right meditation be helpful in one's daily life?*

KRISHNAMURTI: Meditation is a very complex and serious problem, and I shall go into it step by step. Without meditation, life is merely a matter of environment, of circumstances, of pressures and influences, and therefore has very little significance. Without meditation, there is no perfume to life. Without meditation, there is no compassion, no love, and life is then merely a thing of sensation. And without meditation, the mind is not capable of finding out what is true.

Before we ask how to meditate, or what practice is necessary in order to meditate, must we not first find out what meditation is? And the very inquiry into what is meditation, *is* meditation. Please listen to what I am saying, if you will, because this is very important. As I said, a mind that is incapable of meditation, is incapable of understanding life. It is because we do not know what meditation is that our life is so stupid, superficial, made up of mere achievements, failures, successes, misery.

So, to find out what is meditation, *is* meditation; and this evening you and I are going to inquire into it together. To ask how to meditate when you do not know what meditation is, is too immature. How can you practise what you do not know? The books, the priests, the teachers will tell you what meditation is—and they may all be mistaken, because they are all interpre-

ters. An interpreter is a traitor. Please listen, sirs, don't laugh it off. An interpreter is a traitor because he is interpreting according to his conditioning. Truth does not want any interpretation. There can be no interpreter of what is true, because it is you who have to find out what is true. We are now going to find out together the truth about meditation; but if you do not follow step by step, giving your whole attention to it, you will not understand what meditation is. I am not saying this dogmatically, but you will have to see the truth of it for yourself.

Prayer which is a supplication, a petition, either conscious or unconscious, is not meditation, even though such prayer may be answered. The mechanism by which prayer is answered is something which we won't go into now, because it is too complex and would require another half-hour to explain. But you can see that prayer which is a supplication, a petition, a demand, a begging, is not meditation, because you are asking something for yourself or for somebody else.

Then you will find also that the process of controlling the mind is not meditation. Please listen to this, don't throw it out and say "What nonsense!" We are inquiring.

Now, what is the way of concentration in so-called meditation? You try to fix your mind on an idea, on a thought, on a sentence, on a picture or an idol made by the hand or by the mind, but other thoughts constantly creep in. You spend your time fighting them off, till after years of practice in controlling the mind you are able to suppress all ideas except one, and you think you have achieved something. What you have achieved is the technique of suppressing, sublimating, or substituting one idea for another, one desire for another; but in that process is involved conflict; there is a division between the maker of effort and the object he hopes to achieve through effort. This effort to control the mind in order to achieve a result—peace, bliss, nirvana, or whatever it be—is self-centred activity, and nothing more; therefore it is not meditation. This does not mean that in meditation the mind is allowed to wander as it likes. Let us go into this slowly.

We see the truth that a mind which is merely concerned with control, with discipline, with suppressing its own thoughts, is making itself narrow; it is an exclusive mind, and such a mind is incapable of understanding what is meditation. A mind that suppresses part of itself and concentrates on the idea of peace, on an image made by the hand or by the mind, is obviously afraid of its own desires, its own ambitions, its own feelings of envy, greed, and so on, and in suppressing them, such a mind is not meditating; though it may repeat a thousand mantrams, or sit silent and alone in some dark forest or mountain cave, it is incapable of understanding meditation.

So, having discovered that control is not meditation, you begin to ask yourself what are these jumbling thoughts that precipitate themselves one on top of another, that wander all over the place like monkeys, or flutter after each other like butterflies. There is now no question of controlling them, because you see that you *are* the various thoughts and contradictory desires which are endlessly pursuing each other. These thoughts, these contradictions, these desires are part of you; you are not different from them, any more than the qualities of the diamond are different from the diamond itself. Remove the qualities of the diamond, and there is no diamond; remove the qualities, the thoughts of the mind, and there is no mind. So meditation is obviously not a matter of control.

But if you do not control *your* thoughts, then what? Then *you* begin to inquire into your thoughts. Do you understand, sirs? The mind is no longer suppressing thought, but inquiring into the motive, the background of its thought; and you will find that this inquiry into its own thought has an extraordinary effect on the mind. Then the mind ceases to manufacture thought. Please do understand this. When you begin to inquire into the whole process of thinking without suppressing, condemning, or justifying anything, without trying to concentrate on one thought by excluding all other thoughts, then you will find that the mind is no longer manufacturing thought. Please do listen. The mind manufactures thought through sensation, through memory, through the object which it wants to achieve; but the moment it begins to inquire into the process of thinking, it ceases to produce thought, because then the mind is beginning to free itself from that whole process. In this free movement of the mind as it inquires into its own pursuits and sorrows, the mind begins to understand itself, and that understanding comes from self-knowledge.

So you have seen that prayer—which involves conditioning, demand, petition, fear, and so on—is not meditation. Nor is there meditation when one part of the mind which you call the lower self, is dominated by another part of the mind which you call the higher self, or the Atman. This contradiction in the mind is caused by the fact that one desire is controlling another, and that is obviously not meditation. Nor is it meditation to sit in front of a picture and repeat *japams,* mantrams. What happens when you sit quietly and repeat certain phrases? Your mind becomes hypnotized, does it not? Your mind gradually goes to sleep, and you think that you have attained bliss, a marvellous peace. It is only in your daily life that you can find out what meditation is, not in the repetition of certain words and phrases.

Now, if praying, chanting, sitting in front of a picture, controlling thought, is not meditation, then what *is* meditation? The mind has moved away from the false, because it has seen the truth in the false. Do you understand, sirs? The mind has seen the truth that control is false, and this truth has liberated it from the desire to control. Therefore the mind is free to inquire into the process of thinking, which leads to self-knowledge. That is, the mind begins to understand itself when it is just watching its own operation without condemnation, judgment, or evaluation; and then you will find that the mind becomes very quiet, it is not made quiet. Generally you try to *make* the mind quiet; all your religious books, your priests, tell you to train the mind to be quiet, to practise quietness. The mind that has practised quietness, that has trained itself to be still, is like a monkey that has learnt a trick. You cannot have stillness through desire. You have to understand desire, not escape from or suppress it. Because desire is always contradictory, you have to understand it; and in the process of understanding desire, you will find that the mind becomes completely still—the totality of the mind, not just the superficial layer which is occupied with your daily living. Do you understand, sirs? To have ambition, envy, greed, the desire for power, and yet talk about meditation, is to be in a state of illusion. These two are incompatible, they don't go together.

It is only when there is self-knowledge, which is to have an understanding of your daily living, your daily relationships, that the mind becomes quiet without being forced or disciplined to be quiet. Then you will find that

the mind is completely still—the totality of it, the unconscious as well as the conscious. The unconscious, which is the sum total of all your traditions, your memories, your motives, your ambitions, your greed, is far more conservative than the conscious mind, far more effective in its desires and pursuits; and it can be understood only through self-knowledge. When through self-knowledge the mind is completely still, in that stillness you will find there is no experiencer to experience, because the experiencer and the experienced are the same. To realize this requires a great deal of attention, inquiry, discovery. The observer and the observed, the watcher and the watched are one, they are not two separate entities. The thinker is not different from the thought, the two are essentially the same, though for various reasons—convenience, security, permanency, and so on—thought has made the thinker separate and permanent.

So, if you have followed this inquiry into what is meditation, and have understood the whole process of thinking, you will find that the mind is completely still. In that total stillness of the mind, there is no watcher, no observer, and therefore no experiencer at all; there is no entity who is gathering experience, which is the activity of a self-centred mind. Don't say "That is samadhi"—which is all nonsense, because you have only read of it in some book and have not discovered it for yourself. There is a vast difference between the word and the thing. The word is not the thing; the word 'door' is not the door.

So, to meditate is to purge the mind of its self-centred activity. And if you have come this far in meditation, you will find there is silence, a total emptiness. The mind is uncontaminated by society, it is no longer subject to any influence, to the pressure of any desire. It is completely alone; and being alone, untouched, it is innocent. Therefore there is a possibility for that which is timeless, eternal, to come into being.

This whole process is meditation.

*January 27, 1957.*